

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for checking the spelling of words, comprising the steps of:
2 identifying an unfamiliar word;
3 generating at least one alternative spelling of the unfamiliar word to create a word
4 variant;
5 providing the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant to a search engine
6 configured to search for a frequency of use of the unfamiliar word and the at least one
7 word variant; and
8 presenting the results of the word search to the user.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of identifying an unfamiliar word
2 comprises determining whether a word is stored within a word database.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of presenting the user
2 with word suggestions based upon similarly spelled words located within the word
3 database.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one alternative spelling is
2 generated by an algorithm configured to replace letters of the unfamiliar word with
3 similarly sounding letters.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing the unfamiliar word
2 and the at least one word variant to a search engine comprises transmitting the unfamiliar
3 word and the at least one word variant to the search engine via a network from a remote
4 location.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the search engine comprises an Internet
2 search engine.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of presenting results to the user
2 comprises presenting an indication of the frequency with which the unfamiliar word and
3 the at least one word variant appear within a database.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the frequency is expressed in terms of
2 number of hits for the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant.

1 9. The method of claim 7, wherein the frequency is expressed in terms of a
2 percentage.

1 10. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of permitting the user
2 to select the at least one word variant to replace the unfamiliar word after receiving the
3 frequency information.

1 11. A system for checking the spelling of words, comprising:
2 means for identifying an unfamiliar word;
3 means for generating at least one alternative spelling of the unfamiliar word to
4 create a word variant;
5 means for providing the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant to a
6 search engine configured to search for a frequency of use of the unfamiliar word and the
7 at least one word variant; and
8 means for presenting the results of the word search to the user.

1 12. The system of claim 11, further comprising means for presenting the user
2 with suggested words that have similar spellings to the unfamiliar word.

1 13. The system of claim 11, wherein the means for generating at least one
2 alternative spelling comprise an algorithm configured to replace letters of the unfamiliar
3 word with similarly sounding letters.

1 14. The system of claim 1, wherein the means for presenting results to the user
2 comprise means for presenting an indication of the frequency with which the unfamiliar
3 word and the at least one word variant appear within a database.

1 15. The system of claim 14, further comprising means for permitting the user
2 to select the at least one word variant to replace the unfamiliar word after receiving the
3 frequency information.

1 16. A computer readable medium including a program for checking the
2 spelling of words, comprising:
3 logic configured to identify an unfamiliar word;
4 logic configured to generate at least one alternative spelling of the unfamiliar
5 word to create a word variant;
6 logic configured to provide the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant
7 to a search engine configured to search for a frequency of use of the unfamiliar word and
8 the at least one word variant; and
9 logic configured to present the results of the word search to the user.

1 17. The computer readable medium of claim 11, further comprising logic
2 configured to present the user with suggested words that have similar spellings to the
3 unfamiliar word.

1 18. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the logic configured
2 to generate at least one alternative spelling comprises an algorithm configured to replace
3 letters of the unfamiliar word with similarly sounding letters.

1 19. The computer readable medium of claim 1, wherein the logic configured
2 to present results to the user comprises logic configured to present an indication of the
3 frequency with which the unfamiliar word and the at least one word variant appear within
4 a database.

1 20. The computer readable medium of claim 19, further comprising logic
2 configured to permit the user to select the at least one word variant to replace the
3 unfamiliar word after receiving the frequency information.